

**PROCEEDINGS OF**

**FONG FARMERS' CONFERENCE**

**THEME:**

**“SCIENCE AND INNOVATION FOR  
ADDRESSING AGRICULTURAL VALUE CHAIN  
CONSTRAINTS FOR ECONOMIC GROWTH  
AND POVERTY REDUCTION”**

***16<sup>TH</sup> - 18<sup>TH</sup> NOVEMBER, 2010***

**CSIR-STEPRI AUDITORIUM, ACCRA**

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## **LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS**

CAADP – Comprehensive African Agricultural Development Programme

CSIR – Council for Scientific and Industrial Research

FASDEP – Food and Agriculture Sector Development Programme

FBO – Farmer Based Organisation

FONG – Farmer Organisation Network in Ghana

GSGDA – Ghana’s Shared Growth Development Agenda

NAFCO – National Food Buffer Stock Company

## **Introduction**

Farmers Organisation Network in Ghana organised a conference on the theme “science and innovation for addressing agricultural value chain constraint for economic growth and poverty reduction” from 16<sup>th</sup> -18<sup>th</sup> November, 2010 at the CSIR-STEPRI Auditorium, Accra. Participants were 40 farmers from the northern, southern and middle zones of Ghana registered with the network, invited guest and the media.

The objectives of the conference were to:

- update delegates’ knowledge with respect to the theme;
- communicate government policies on agriculture to delegates such as the Medium Term Development Plan, Comprehensive African Agricultural Development Programme (CAADP) and Food and Agricultural Sector Development Programme (FASDEP II);
- identify farmers’ constraints and brainstorm on possible solutions

## **DAY ONE (1)**

### **Opening Ceremony**

The programme commenced with an opening prayer by Ms. Helena Azu, Gender Desk Officer of Farmers’ Organisation network in Ghana. The high profile personalities that graced the opening ceremony were the Director-General of the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) Prof. Abdulai Baba Salifu, the Director for Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR)-STEPRI; Vice President of Farmers Organisation Network in Ghana, Chief Jesewuni Issahaku; National Co-ordinator for Farmers Organisation Network in Ghana, Ms Hannah Nyamekye. The Honourable Deputy Minister, Hon. Yaw Effah-Baafi who was to deliver the key note address could not attend the programme due to his engagement in an equally important duty.

### **Chairman’s Remarks**

In his acceptance speech, the Chairman for the opening ceremony, Dr. George Essegbey highlighted the importance of science, and innovation for sustainable development, particularly in the developing world. He emphasized the significance of the conference as a good opportunity for farmers to channel their grievances through their organisational heads to the appropriate institution for address.

### **Welcome Address**

The National Co-ordinator for Farmers Organisation Network in Ghana welcomed and appreciated delegates for honouring the invitation to participate in the conference. She reiterated that the theme for the conference was chosen for the fact that science and innovation are tools for enhancing agricultural production and for addressing

constraints along the agricultural value chain. In furtherance to this, she urged participants to disseminate the knowledge gained to other FBO members at the grassroots who did not have the opportunity to participate in the programme.

The generous support from the following sponsors who made the conference possible was duly acknowledged.

- The American people (USAID) through ACDI/VOCA Agricultural Development and Value Chain Enhancement Programme
- Council for Scientific and Industrial Research Directorate
- Wienco Ghana Ltd
- Akwapim Rural Bank Limited (Mamfe-Akwapim)
- Accra Brewery Ltd

#### **Statement by the Vice President of FONG**

In the statement read by the Vice President of FONG, Chief Jessiwuni, he stated that FONG is one of the giant farmer organisations in Ghana and since its establishment in 2003 have organised several seminars and workshops to communicate government policies to members and also provided feedback to government. He acknowledged the importance and potential impact of the conference and urged participants to feel free to participate in the discussions.

#### **Opening Address**

The opening address was delivered by the Director-General of CSIR, Dr. Abdulai Baba Salifu. He emphasized that enhancing smallholder productivity and sustainable economic growth are pre-requisite to achieve the full contributions of agriculture to overall growth and development. The theme of the conference was to throw a search light on our ability to maximize the benefits from agricultural productivity to enhance national development and improve the living conditions of the rural poor owing to the fact that agricultural productivity is crucial for economic growth in Ghana.

Emphasis was made on the need to address the numerous constraints that excludes smallholders' from participating in the value chain to enable them increase their competitiveness in national, regional and global trade.

He stressed that science and innovation hold the key for addressing some value chain constraints for economic growth and poverty reduction. Innovations developed by CSIR in the area of crops and animals were also presented. He advised farmers to take advantage of the innovations developed to increase their productivity.

### **Keynote Address**

On his part, the Director-General of CSIR, Dr. Abdulai Baba Salifu, apologised for the absence of the Deputy Minister for Food and Agriculture, Honourable Yaw Effah-Baafi. He stood in for the Honourable Deputy Minister and indicated that farmer organisations such as FONG have a role to play in the implementation of the Food and Agricultural Sector Policy Development Programme (FASDEP). He made reference to the fact that the Ministry of Food and Agriculture was ready to listen to the problems of farmers and called for effective documentation of the deliberations of the conference which should be brought to the attention of policy makers.

### **Technical Session 1**

The technical session was chaired by Chief Jessiwuni, Vice President of Farmers Organisation Network in Ghana. Dr. George Essegbey, Director of CSIR-STEPRI presented on the theme with focus on science and innovation. Participants were introduced to the science and innovation concept, value chain and CSIR contribution of agricultural innovations. He further expressed that, science and innovation could be employed to address agricultural value chain constraints if there are agro-business incubators, public-private partnerships, ICT development and promotion, promotion of alternate source of energy, strong linkages between farmer organisations and agricultural enterprises.

All presentations by facilitators were followed with questions for clarifications and contributions from delegates.

### **Technical Session 2**

Mr. Daniel Kwesi Attivor, Technical Agronomist from Weinco introduced participants to two of their products:

Pannar 53 variety, a special maize from South Africa which is very high yielding; and Lumax herbicide. The herbicide, a pre-emergence weed control has a very high-performance. It is a broad spectrum for the toughest grasses and broadleaf including waterhemp, velvet, lambsquarter and pigweeds. Pictures of some farmers' field cultivated with Pannar 53 were shown to farmers to appreciate how the crop grows very well.

### **Technical Session 3**

The last presentation for day one was on the value chain concept with focus on the conference theme. Mr. Isaac Boateng, Technical Associate, ACIDI/VOCA ADVANCE Programme introduced participants to the concept of economic growth and poverty reduction and effect of globalisation on competitiveness. Another dimension of his presentation touching on the value Chain approach was discussed. Some prevailing

constraints along the value chain in Ghana were stressed by the presenter with contributions from some participants.

## **DAY TWO**

### **Technical Session 4:**

An official from the Ministry of Food and Agriculture, Mr. Alabi Bortey briefed participants about the vision and mission of MoFA, policy objectives of the FASDEP, the CAADP Compact, the METASIP context, targets, implementation mechanisms and the contribution of agriculture to the economy of Ghana.

Some achievements made in the agricultural sector were highlighted and included the passing of the plant and fertilizer act; fishing regulation and agricultural mechanisation. Some of the achievements in the area of projects and programmes were:

- Northern Rural Growth Programme
- Livestock Development Programme (credit in kind)
- Cashew Development Project
- Root and Tubers Improvement Marketing Project
- Nerica
- Inland valley Development Project
- Small Scale Rice Development Project
- Afram Plains District Agric. Development Project
- Rice Sector Support Project
- Promotion of Perennial Crops – Out grower Schemes (rubber and oil palm)
- Afram Plains District Agricultural Development Project
- Youth in Agriculture Programme with the following four components:
  - ✓ *Block Farm Programme*
  - ✓ *Livestock Programme*
  - ✓ *Fisheries Programme*
  - ✓ *Agri-business programme*

- FBO Development
- Agro processing

He further touched on the establishment of the National Food Buffer Stock Company (NAFCO), wholly government owned with the dual responsibility of holding food security buffer stocks and intervening in the markets to ensure competitive prices to farmers in times of glut.

### **Speech delivered on behalf of the National Womens' leader**

A speech was delivered by Madam Gladys Serwaa Edusah, women's' leader for the middle zone on behalf of the national women's leaders Mrs Lydia Sasu. She stressed on the appreciable number of women who participated in the conference and recommended women for the role they play in food crop production in Ghana. She recognized the numerous constraints faced by women in accessing production resources. She advocated for women participate in the discussions for their concerns to be documented and addressed.

### **Technical Session 5:**

Mr. Christopher Conduah, planning assistant at the National Development Planning Commission briefed participants on Government of Ghana's vision 2010 national policy frameworks beginning from GPRS 1, GPRS II with much focus on Ghana's Shared Growth Development Agenda (GSGDA) and its prospects for smallholder farmers. The GSGDA is to achieve and sustain macroeconomic stability while placing the economy on a path of higher growth. He further discussed the strategies adopted to accelerate the development of smallholder farmers in Ghana

### **Documentation of farmers concerns/ recommendations**

Participants were grouped into three to discuss their challenges and make recommendations on the basis of the conference presentation, discussions and outcomes. Recommendations made by delegates were as follows:

- Government should allocate a special project for women farmers and if possible smallholder women farmers should be awarded during farmers' day celebration.
- The general public should be educated to improve the consumption of the locally produced rice. Again, locally produced rice should be served at state functions and all donor support programmes.
- Government should assist processors to register with the Food and Drugs Board.
- Government should support farmers with machinery such as rice processors, shea-butter extractors, tractors etc.

- The age limit for the Youth in Agriculture Programme should be reduced from 60 years and above to 18 – 35 years. Again, Farmers Platforms should be involved in the implementation of the programme.
- Government should improve feeder roads to facilitate the transportation of foodstuff to urban centres
- Payment for the allocation of Government tractors to smallholder farmers should be pegged at 25% initial deposit instead of the current 50%.
- The Ministry of Food and Agriculture should intensify their farmer field schools to reach out to more farmers in remote areas.
- Provision of credit to small scale farmers should be improved to enable them procure the right inputs for production.
- Government should provide opportunity for the private sector to establish processing industries in rural communities.
- Sand winning which destroys agricultural land should be discouraged by district assemblies.
- Rabbit and grasscutter industry should be developed in Ghana.
- Government should actively involve farmers and fishermen in agricultural policy formulation.

### **Closing Ceremony**

Dr. George Essegbey in his closing remark stressed on the importance of the conference output as not only relevant for FONG but also for guiding national policies for the development of agriculture in Ghana. He promised CSIR-STEPRI's constant contact with FONG and called for good linkages between farmer organisations and other knowledge institutions in Ghana. He was of the view that women farmers should be given special attention and their constraints addressed to boost their production activities.